

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By the present remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that that the rejections of the October 17, 2007 Office Action have been overcome, and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Summary of the Official Office Action

The Office Action rejected Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-11, and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ancin (U.S. 6,731,775) in view of Wang et al. (U.S. 5,680,479, hereinafter Wang).

For the reasons set forth below, Applicant submits that each of the pending claims is allowable over the cited art, and an indication of allowability of the present application is therefore respectfully requested.

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action rejected Claim 15 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. More specifically, according to the Office Action, Claim 15 recites the limitation of "units of a predetermined number of characters" as not

being explicitly depicted with sufficient descriptions in the instant claim (Office Action, Page 2).

In lieu of the present amendment, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 at the Examiner's earliest convenience

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In re Claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-11, and 15-20

In lieu of the present amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 3-6 and 8-10 without prejudice and reserves the right to present them at a later time. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 3-6 and 8-10 are moot and Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of claims 3-6 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 7, 11 and 15-20 as being unpatentable over Ancin in further view of Wang because each and every feature of the present invention is not taught, suggested, or disclosed in any of the references alone or in any permissible combination.

Let us hypothetically assume that the combination of the Ancin and Wang references is proper, which the Applicant disputes. Applicant respectfully submits that the combination still does not teach or suggest any embodiment where at least a **determination** is made as to the order of embedding a plurality of document areas based on **the size of the document area** or the **number of**

characters included in the document area, and embedding digital watermark information in the document image in accordance with the determined order of the embedding, as recited in Independent Claim 1.

As amended, independent Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, . . . "a step of **determining** an order of the embedding for the plurality of document areas **based on the size of the document area** or the **number of characters included in the document area**, wherein the order of the embedding is determined based on a relationship of relative positions of the document areas in a case where the plurality of document areas have the same size of the document area or the same number of characters included in the document area. . ."

Applicant respectfully submits that either cited reference, alone or in combination, fails to disclose at least the above-described features of the present invention.

Ancin is seen to describe a "method for embedding a message in a text-containing document" (column 2, lines 10-12). The method comprises the "steps of obtaining a pixel representation of the document; identifying text pixels of the document; determining each text line of the document; partitioning each determined text line into a plurality of blocks; identifying each block as valid if that block contains at least a predetermined percentage of text pixels; and embedding a binary element in each valid block by labeling text pixels within that block with a first color or a second color to embed the message in the document" (column 2, lines 12-21). Nothing in Ancin is seen to even remotely teach, suggest, or show

embedding digital watermark information in a document image in which a plurality of document areas is located. More specifically, Ancin fails to describe determining the order of embedding a plurality of document areas based on the size of the document area or the number of characters included in the document area.

Wang is seen to describe a "method and apparatus for selecting blocks of pixels from pixel image data in which contours of connected components in the pixel image data, rectangles are formed around each connected component so outlined, rectangles are selectively connected widthwisely based on size and proximity to other rectangles to form lines, and lines are selectively connected vertically based on size and proximity to other lines to form blocks" (column 3, lines 49-56).

Additionally, Wang describes a method and apparatus for "recognizing characters in pixel image data in which blocks of pixels from the pixel image data are selected by outlining contours of connected components in the pixel image data, determining whether the outlined connected components include text units or non-text units, selectively connecting text units widthwisely to form text blocks, and selectively forming text lines vertically to form text blocks" (column 4, lines 6-12). Wang merely discloses that a hierarchical tree structure of an image is formed so that the parts of the image can be reconstructed in the proper order (column 4, lines 3-5).

Nothing in Wang is seen to even remotely teach, suggest, or show embedding digital watermark information in a document image in which a

plurality of document areas is located. In addition, Wang also fails to describe determining the order of embedding a plurality of document areas based on the size of the document area or the number of characters included in the document area.

Because Ancin and Wang lack at least the above-noted features of the present invention, Applicant respectfully submits that Ancin and Wang, alone or in combination, fails to disclose each and every feature recited in Claim 1, and thus, the Office Action has failed to establish an adequate evidentiary basis to support a rejection under 35 U.S.C § 103(a). Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent Claim 1 and indicate the claim as allowable at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Independent Claims 15-20 were rejected for essentially the same reasons as Claim 1. As such, the arguments set forth above with respect to Claim 1 are applicable to Claims 15-20.

Claims 2, 7, and 11 depend from at least allowable base Claim 1 and are rejected for the same reasons. As such, Applicant submits that these claims are allowable at least for the reason that each of these claims depends from allowable base Claims 1 and recite additional features that further define the present invention.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-11, and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims pending in the application meet the requirements for patentability and respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate the allowance of such claims at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to deduct or credit any underpayments or overpayments submitted in conjunction with this response from/to deposit account number **502456**.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner may contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the (949) 932-3329.

Respectfully submitted,

2/18/08

/Sivon Kalminov/

Date

Sivon Kalminov, Reg. No. 40,042
Attorney for Applicant

Canon U.S.A. Inc., Intellectual Property Division
15975 Alton Parkway
Irvine, CA 92618-3731
Fax: (949) 932-3560